**Outline**

TOPIC: - How does Christopher Nolan use the relationship between movie watching and dreaming in *Inception* to distinguish between the reality and the dream state and in what ways was he successful?

Previous questions (in case need to modify the question above):

1. How does one successfully plant an idea in someone else’s mind? Why is this considered a “crime”?
2. How does the director distinguish between reality and science fiction?
3. Has science advanced far enough to allow us to control the dream state? What is the relationship between movie watching and dreaming?

Introduction:

1. Give background/summary of the film itself
2. Give background on dreams and briefly mention link to movies
3. Give background on director Christopher Nolan’s films- how they covered science fiction and his use of special effects in action movies

Thesis: As an established film director, Christopher Nolan successfully catered his film *Inception* to relate the movie watching experience to dreaming as a neurophysiological process to captivate sci-fi moviegoers. His distinct use of special effects in the midst of action makes it seem more scientific and less fictional; however, by leaving the reality and the dream state ambiguous, Nolan reveals the lack of understanding and the inherent limitations of filmmaking in imitating the complex layering of dream states within the collective unconscious.

Body Paragraphs:

1. **The idea of *Inception—*planting a memory in the mind of someone else—is based primarily in neuroscience; in the film, Nolan relates this concept to the neurophysiological process of losing oneself in a movie to establish credibility.**
	* + Close reading on quote from Cobb-- “What is the most resilient parasite? Bacteria? A virus? An intestinal worm? An idea. Resilient... highly contagious. Once an idea has taken hold of the brain it's almost impossible to eradicate. An idea that is fully formed - fully understood - that sticks; right in there somewhere.”
		+ *The Neuroscience of Inception* by Jonah Lehrer– quote that elucidates neurophysiological relationship between dreaming and movie watching
			- “Inception is about making movies,” Lehrer states, “and cinema is the shared dream that truly interests the director. The neurophysiological process of losing oneself in a movie collapses the already thin distinction between dreaming and movie watching.”
		+ Scholarly article on implanting memories:
			- Pezdek, K, Blandon-Gilton, I, Lam, S, Hart, RE, Schooler, JW. "Is knowing believing? The role of event plausibility and background knowledge in planting false beliefs about the personal past." 🡪 show scientific basis for Inception
			- Cobb’s success in planting and extracting an idea from the head of the corporation is largely dependent upon his knowledge of the man’s background and personal relationship with his father and grandfather.
2. Address integration of real science into the fictional aspects🡪 research on dreams, Freudian states of consciousness, and analysis of the movie effects and similarities to dreaming
	* Christopher Nolan uses the loss of gravity to signal to both the characters and the audience members a transition between dream states (what is known as “dream layering” in science today)
		+ Close reading on final scene where elevator drops them into final dream state🡪 also mention “limbo”
			- “Unconscious Mental States” by Ruth Weintraub
* Give clear distinction between the conscious and subconscious in the dream state, which is the scene of the crime in the movie
* “Most of our strongly held beliefs are subconscious, since very few thoughts are consciously present in our minds at the same time. An unconscious belief is one to which the agent is not disposed to assent, and which might be accompanied by a conscious belief in its negation” (insert page number)
* “’Inception’: 9 Surprising Sleep Facts From the Movie” by Matthew Edlund
* Elucidate what is science and what is science fiction in film
* Tie into use of special effects in captivating audience to make movie seem more believable
1. Nolan distinguishes between dreams and reality through the use of a personal item; however, the insignificance of the differences between the two states is revealed through the main character, Cobb.
* Close reading/analysis of final scene with Cobb and totem
	+ - * "The Lost Unconscious: Delusions and Dreams in *Inception*” by Mark Fisher-
				+ In an interview with Nolan, he draws on the importance of the top spinning, which is Cobb’s personal “totem” which allows him to distinguish between dream and reality: “The most important emotional thing about the top spinning at the end is that Cobb is not looking at it. He doesn’t care.” Not caring whether we’re lying to ourselves may be the price for happiness—or at least the price one pays for release from excruciating mental anguish” (insert page number)
			* "This Time the Dream’s on Me” by A.O Scott
			* Scott points to the relationship between movies and dreams, claiming that cinema seems to replicate the uncanny, image-making power of the mind.
* Analyze quote: “If our dreams feed the movies. The movies feed our dreams. But somehow, our imaginations are still hungry.” 🡪Perhaps the inherent relationship between movie watching and dreaming is the reason *Inception* is overly ambiguous
* “Since Freud believed that dreams were compounded out of the primal matter of the unconscious and the prosaic events of daily life, he would have to acknowledge that they are also, for many of us, made out of movies in today’s society.”
1. While Nolan intentionally leaves the difference between the reality and the dream states ambiguous, he demonstrates our current lack of understanding of the Freudian unconscious onscreen.
* Close reading of
* “Why Men Commit Crimes” by Satoshi Kanazawa and Mary C. Still.

TO BE CONTINUED